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THE WHIST-PLAYER

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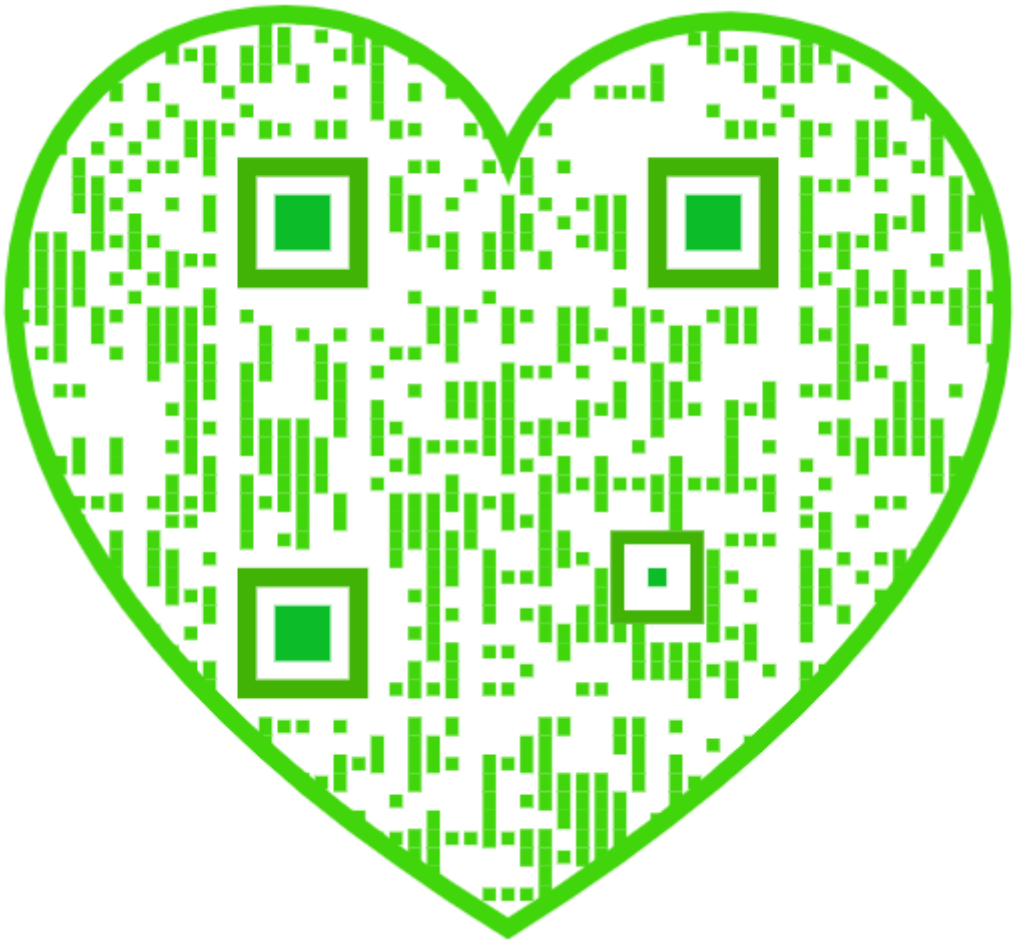

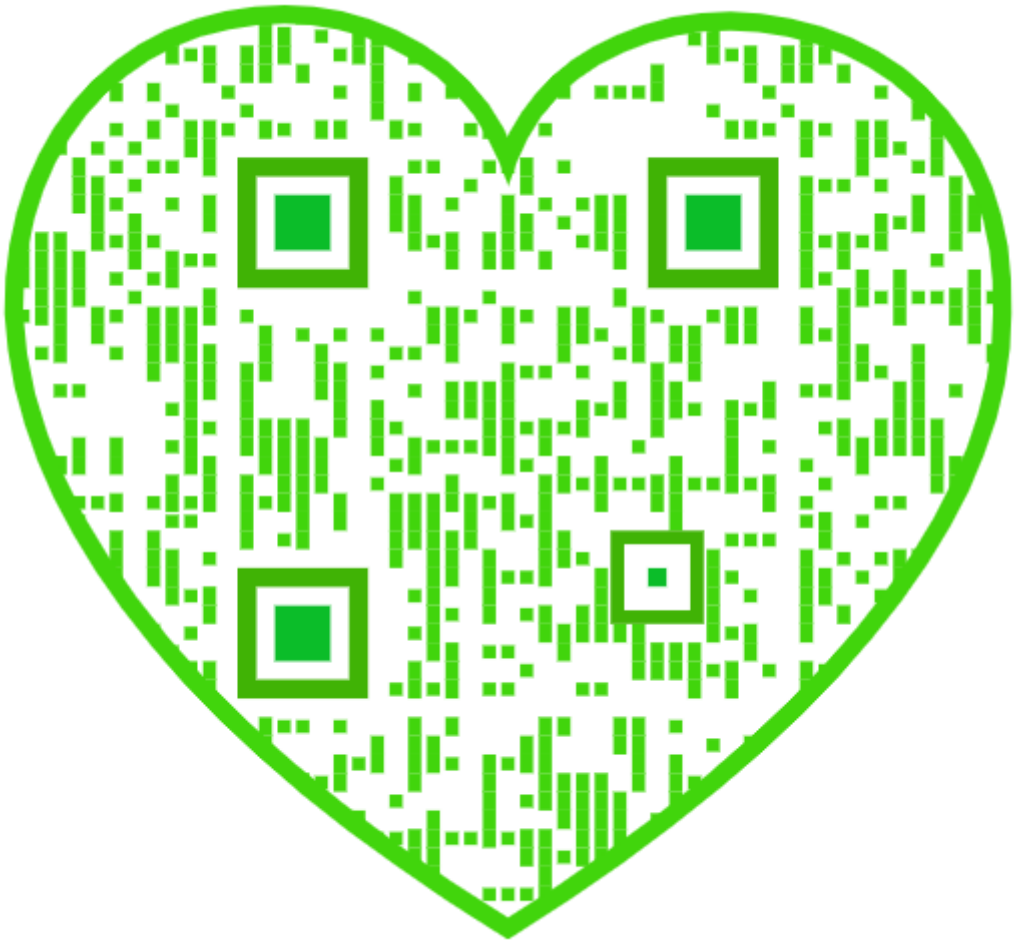

THE

WHIST-PLAYER

THE

LAWS AND PRACTICE OF SHORT-WHIST

Explained and Illustrated

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL B * * * *

SECOND EDITION

LONDON

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193 PICCADILLY

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TO

THE ARMY AND NAVY CLUB.

GENTLEMEN,

It being generally admitted that justice is nowhere so impartially administered as by a court composed of British Officers, I fearlessly dedicate this treatise to you; trusting that you will mercifully consider the case of one against whom there are no former convictions, and who for the first time appears before your august tribunal.

B.

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PREFACE.

PRESUMING to write a treatise on any science, the principles and laws of which have already been explained by numerous able pens, exposes the writer, and with some degree of justice, to the imputation of great vanity.

The fact implies, that the writer, in his own estimation, possesses either a more extensive acquaintance with the subject than former expositors, or a more perspicuous method of imparting his knowledge to others.

I cannot plead guilty to the first charge, should such be brought against me; being fully sensible of my own inferiority, and ever ready to express my admiration of superior excellence in others.

I may certainly be considered liable to the second charge; as the hope of being able to give a clearer explanation of the rules and maxims of the game than any as yet offered to the whist-playing world has induced me to undertake the present work.

By the few authors on this subject whom I have read, regular method appears but little regarded; their instructions being confined, almost entirely, to mere statements of facts, clothed often in ambiguous language. Instead of gradually leading their pupils from general and simple rules to an acquaintance with the deeper intricacies of fine play, accompanying their progress with lucid explanations, here so absolutely necessary, they confine themselves to simply

stating that "with certain hands certain cards are to be played," without giving the reasons why; leaving thus to the individual and unassisted efforts of the student the solution of each problem.

Such imperfect instructions render the study of the game most irksome; and I have known many a one throw down the book with disgust, trusting rather—most fatal error—to time and chance for the acquisition of that knowledge which a correct treatise ought pleasingly to convey.

My object being to give this apparently laborious study a less repulsive aspect, I trust my friends may be inclined to put a more favourable construction on my seeming presumption.

The only merit to which this treatise can lay claim is, novelty in the plan pursued.

It being generally allowed that no one can learn the game of whist, and acquire a facility of readily playing the different hands, without having the cards spread out before him; and being aware of the silly objection most people entertain against being found "learning to play cards," although they will without hesitation openly sit down to learn to play any thing else (a distinction without a difference),—the idea struck me, that a book of instruction might be so contrived as to do away, in a great measure, with the necessity of conspicuously strewing a pack of cards on the table, viz. by annexing sketches or drawings of the different suits or hands which the writer's instructions attempt to explain, and to which the reader can without trouble immediately refer.

I imagine that the memory will be materially assisted by recalling these pictured impressions.

Should my method succeed in assisting the efforts of the young beginner in his praiseworthy pursuit of the most noble and intellectual game ever invented for the recreation of man—far superior to

that heavy dull game of chess,—the trouble I have taken in its arrangement will be fully compensated. I have, at any rate, the consolation of knowing, that, if no one else profits by my labours and researches, I have in the mean time gained a deeper insight into the intricate mazes of the game myself, which has been a source of much gratification, making pleasant what would otherwise have been most toilsome—*labor ipse voluptas.*

I cannot believe the time lost which may be spent in acquiring a knowledge of this beautiful game. It is now, in good society, so universally played in all civilised countries, that whoever enters those delightful circles must expect to be called upon occasionally to take a hand at the whist-table. His inability will be attributed to churlishness or stupidity.

It is undoubtedly the duty of every person who goes much into society to contribute as much as possible to the general amusement —its principal object,—and to promote good feeling. A knowledge of this favourite game gives the opportunity of displaying these amiable qualities, and will therefore generally insure a welcome and gracious reception.

As long as players confine themselves to moderate stakes, as long as the game is simply made a matter of recreation, nothing can be less objectionable than its pursuit. But when men make it the business of their lives—passing not only all their nights, but devoting a great portion of each day to the card-table, playing for large sums,—it becomes as reprehensible and as detestable as any other system of gambling. These men are generally notorious for their overbearing manners, dictatorial tone, and irritability of temper. Nothing can be more abominable, more ungentlemanlike, or in worse possible taste, than this loud reproof and display of ill-temper. Great forbearance is required to restrain your own justly-irritated

feelings when subjected to this vulgar insolence. You cannot bully whist into a man's brains; and showing ill-temper with a beginner only adds to his embarrassment. For my own part, whenever I have had the misfortune to meet with one of these roaring fault-finders—and, with sorrow be it said, there are many such,—so far from receiving any advantage from his rude remarks, I have only been impressed with indignation and disgust. The constant effort —which propriety strictly requires—to control these feelings has driven all remembrance of the plot of the game out of my head, my thoughts being entirely absorbed by the mortification of being compelled to submit patiently to this insolent vulgarity.

I have even seen—and with much heartfelt reluctance be it said—some of the softer sex (for ladies love the game, and right well many of them play) give way to these unseemly bursts of angry feelings, distorting their usually sweet and placid features with ugly wrinkles. Could they but once behold the hateful deformity thus produced—this frightful metamorphosis,—the lesson would last them for ever.

> "Fie, fie! unknit that threat'ning unkind brow,
> And dart not scornful glances from those eyes:
> It blots thy beauty, as frosts bite the meads;
> And in no sense is meet or amiable." *Taming of the Shrew.*

Courtesy is nowhere more requisite, or its absence more remarkable, than at the whist-table. But let it not carry you beyond those limits which the laws of the game prescribe. Passing them generally leads to future embarrassment. Play the game rigorously: give and take no more than the fixed rules strictly authorise. This is the only true way to avoid unpleasant discussions.

I have not the vain pretension to believe that any remarks contained in this treatise will convey the slightest information to the

accomplished whist-player. They are addressed to, and solely intended for, the uninitiated. Being grounded on the written opinions of the most approved authors, they must give a true notion of the real theory of the game. This once thoroughly understood, practice becomes comparatively easy, and will in due time lead to perfection. Having once reached the goal, keep in remembrance the indulgence you have required during your progress there. Have a kind consideration for the efforts of others, and note their faults with temper and forbearance. Should you unfortunately discover that constitutional infirmity robs you of the power of controlling your temper, abandon at once and for ever all idea of becoming a whist-player. By this generous self-denial you will be spared the mortifying reflection which must disturb those conscious of having so repeatedly marred the pleasure and enjoyment of others.

I have said nothing concerning the laws of that obsolete game called "Long-Whist." A few of its votaries may, I believe, still be heard of in distant provinces; but I leave this interesting discovery to the curious and zealous antiquary, in his geological researches among the fossil remains of the eighteenth century.

THE LAWS OF SHORT-WHIST

Laws of the Game.

It is almost incredible that the scientific game of Whist, which has for so many years been the favourite pastime of men of intellect, which is now so habitually played in all civilised countries, and in the pursuit of which enormous sums are yearly lost and won,—should possess no fixed code of laws, by an appeal to which disputes might be immediately, and without further argument, determined. This is truly much to be regretted, and the inconvenience hence resulting is universally acknowledged.

It is equally surprising, that where the remedy is so simple, it should not long since have been applied.

Let a certain chosen number of the members of the different influential clubs in London meet. Let a code of laws, compiled from the most approved authors on this subject, be submitted to their judgment. When carefully revised, and declared by them in every way eligible, let their opinion and decision stamp it as authentic, that from the laws it may contain there should be no appeal.

I should imagine that the different clubs in London, and those in provincial towns, would offer no objection to the adoption of such a code, by a reference to which any dispute might be at once definitively settled.

It remains only for me to give a copy of those laws by which the game is generally regulated.

Rubber. I. Four form a rubber. In cutting for partners, the two Drawing for partners. highest and the two lowest play together. If, in drawing for partners, two or more cards of equal value appear, they must be put aside, and those who drew them proceed again till unequal cards are drawn.* The original lowest plays with the lowest of the last drawers, and is entitled to the choice of Cutting out. cards and seats. If more than four players are desirous of joining the table, at the expiration of the rubber one or two cut out, the highest retiring, to admit those waiting. Six generally form a table, indeed ought always to do so: allowing three to cut in becomes tiresome; therefore, when seven players accidentally meet, a "dummy" table ought to be formed. If only four are playing, it is optional with them to play two rubbers before cutting again for partners, and Seats. choice of cards and seats. In cutting, the ace is lowest. Seats once chosen cannot be changed during the rubber.

Shuffling. II. Every player is entitled to shuffle the cards; the dealer having the right of giving the final shuffle before placing the cards to be cut. Shuffling the adversaries' cards is not compulsory; but it is customary for the player on the right of the last dealer to collect the cards at the end of the game, shuffle them, and place them to the left of his right-hand adversary.

III. In shuffling, the cards must be above and free from the table.

* If two cards only of equal value are drawn, and they are either superior or inferior to the other two, the drawers of these become partners of course.

IV. The pack is then placed conveniently for your right-hand adversary to cut, who must take care that more than three cards are in each parcel, otherwise it is not a fair one. Cutting.

V. If a card is exposed in cutting, a fresh cut is required.

VI. Having once commenced dealing, you cannot call for a fresh cut, unless an accidentally faced card is found in the pack; nor can you do so if this faced card should be the last one.

VII. The adversaries have a right to call for a fresh deal, if the dealer looks at the bottom, or trump card, before the deal is completed. Dealing.

VIII. If a card is exposed in dealing, those not in fault have the option of calling for a fresh deal; but if a fresh deal is not demanded, the exposed card cannot be called during the game. Exposed card.

IX. If a dealer drops two cards together, and perceives the error at once, he can rectify it; but if he lets fall a card to the next hand, the deal is lost, for he cannot pass on a card from more than one parcel. This penalty must be exacted before the trump-card is turned. Dropping two cards.

X. If the adversaries touch the cards during the deal, they cannot call a fresh one under any circumstances: and should the dealer misdeal, he may deal again.

XI. Any one dealing out of turn may be stopped before the trump-card is turned; but the trump-card once turned, the deal proceeds in rotation. If the cards have by this mistake been changed, they must remain so to the end of the rubber. Dealing out of turn.

XII. If the dealer drops the last card on his own parcel face downwards, he loses the deal; but he may place it apart, without turning it, while bets are made.

Trump card.

XIII. The trump-card must be left exposed till the dealer has played; he must then take it up, or it is liable to be called. No one after this has a right to see it, or ask what it was, but may at any time during the game ask what are trumps.

Naming cards.

XIV. You are entitled to require each player to name his card before the trick is put together, but not after the cards have been touched.

One card too many.

XV. If one of the players remains with one card too many, having omitted to play to a trick, a fresh deal may be demanded.

Playing out of turn.

XVI. If the third player plays before the second, the fourth may play before his partner. If the fourth player plays before the second, the adversaries may compel the second to win the trick, or prevent him from doing so.

Exposed card.

XVII. Every card exposed and named may be called whenever it will not constitute a revoke; and this call may be repeated till the card is played. This is often of serious consequence, as the party in fault will not be permitted to trump a suit in which he has a renounce as long as that remains in his hand. If two or more cards fall to the same trick, the opponents decide as to which shall remain: the others may be treated as exposed cards, and as such subsequently called.

Calling a wrong card.

XVIII. He who calls a wrong card may be compelled to play his best or worst card of any suit during the deal.

XIX. Your partner cannot deal for you without general consent.

XX. If a player timely discovers that he has trumped a suit by mistake, and withdraws his trump, he may be compelled to play the best or lowest of the suit, and to play the exposed trump when called. Erroneous ruff.

XXI. Declaring that you can win the game, or a certain number of tricks, or giving the slightest intimation concerning your hand, empowers the adversaries to demand that all your cards be exposed on the table.

XXII. Before the last trick is turned, you may ask to see the preceding one—eight cards being thus exposed. Eight cards seen.

XXIII. If the player in fault has none of the suit called, he is exempt from all further penalty. Exemption.

XXIV. Hands thrown on the table must remain there, and cannot be taken up again under any circumstances. Exposed hands.

XXV. A revoke is not established until the trick has been turned and quitted, or until the party revoking, or his partner, has played again. Revoke.

XXVI. The party revoking forfeit three points, which the adversaries may either take from their score or add to their own; or take three of their tricks and add them to their own parcel, whichever may appear most advantageous. Severe penalty.

XXVII. A revoke cannot be claimed after the cards are cut for the next deal. When not claimable.

XXVIII. If a revoke is claimed, and the adversaries mix the cards before the point is settled, they pay the forfeit. When cards are mixed.

XXIX. You may always ask your partner if he has none of a suit he renounces; if he has committed an error, he can False renounce.

rectify it, but remains amenable to the usual penalty for an "exposed card" (XVII.).

Tricks and honours, when claimable.

XXX. Tricks may be scored at any time during the game; not so honours, which must have been claimed before the completion of the ensuing deal. The claim having been once allowed, they can be scored at any time.

Fourteen cards in one hand.

XXXI. Fourteen cards in any one hand constitute a misdeal, provided all the others have not their proper complement. If thirteen cards are found in each of the other three hands, the pack must have been superabundant, by the accidental introduction of a supernumerary card; when the deal is not lost, but a fresh one may be demanded.

Less than thirteen.

XXXII. Should one of the players hold less than thirteen cards, the deal is not lost; and should the apparent deficiency have been caused by a "dropped card," he is subject to the severe and fixed penalty for a "revoke" for each time he shall fail to play to the suit to which this dropped card belonged.

Reprehensible conduct.

XXXIII. Whoever shall by word or gesture show approval or disapproval of his partner's play during the game shall forfeit one point, to be added to his adversaries' score or taken from his own.*

* This is an excellent law, and should invariably be most rigorously enforced.

Technical Terms.

FIVE points make the *game:* two games out of three make the *rubber,* for which also two points in addition are reckoned.

A *single* game when the opponents have scored three.

A *double* when they have scored one or two.

A *treble* when they have scored nothing, commonly called "love."

Bumper, two treble games, which reckons eight points.

Finesse, when you risk winning a trick second or third hand, with the third or fourth best, having also in your hand the best, with the hope that the intermediate card may be on your right. If your first card wins, you are certain of making two tricks in the suit if it goes round a second time. Ex. If you hold ace, queen, of the suit led, you put on the queen; if the king is on your right, she of course wins, and your ace secures the second trick.

Force: playing a suit which has been renounced to "force" your partner or adversary to trump.

King card: the highest remaining of a suit.

Long trumps: the remaining trump or trumps being in one hand.

Loose card: a card of no value.

Love: not having scored.

Minor tenace: second and fourth best, as king, knave.

Misdeal: not having in turn given thirteen cards to each hand.

Points: each trick made over six counts one point. The four honours being with partners count four points; three honours with partners count two; adversaries holding two each, they are said to be "divided," and nothing is reckoned for them.

Renounce: having none of a suit led.

Revoke: not following suit when able to do so.

Score: the number of points marked.

Slam: when either party wins every trick.

Tenace is when fourth hand holds first and third best, which ensures two tricks. Ex. Fourth hand holds ace, queen: if the king is led, ace takes it, and queen wins second trick; if king is not led, queen wins the first, and ace secures second. If second player holds ace, queen, ten, he "finesses" queen, trusting to the king being on his right; if, however, she is taken on his left, he becomes last player with ace, ten, against knave, and the tenace is thus established.

See-saw: partners ruffing an alternate suit.

Sequence: cards in succession, as 2, 3, 4, ace, king, queen, &c.

Tierce: a sequence of three.	Major	Ace to queen.
Quart: a sequence of four.	Major	Ace to knave.
Quint: a sequence of five.	Major	Ace to ten.

The Odds.

A DEEP calculation of the odds, as explained by some authors, is superfluous and unnecessary, and would infallibly involve the young whist-player in much perplexity. It is nevertheless essential that he should make himself acquainted with the following, as a knowledge of them may frequently assist him in making his leads.

1. It is 2 to 1 that your partner does not hold a card which you have not.

2. It is 5 to 4 that your partner holds one card out of any two.

3. It is 3 to 1 that he does not hold two cards out of any three.

4. It is 5 to 2 that he holds one card out of three.

5. It is 4 to 1 that he holds one card out of any four.

6. It is 3 to 2 that he does not hold two cards out of four.

The odds as above given are not, perhaps, strictly correct, but they are sufficiently so for all useful purposes.

The odds given in favour of the winners of the first game winning the rubber are 5 to 2, but they are positively 3 to 1.

At the commencement of the game the odds are about 6 to 5 in favour of the dealer, with players of equal skill.

Introductory Remarks.

Sort your cards carefully, and range the black and white suits alternately: they will be thus more easily distinguished and remembered. Do not put your trumps on either flank, or your watchful and keen-eyed opponents may detect the number you hold. If you place them always on the left—as some thoughtless players always do,—and to the first lead you are seen to draw a low card fourth from the left, it will at once be known that you hold still three superior trumps to the one you have played. This must tell greatly against you. Count the number you hold in each suit; and after every round, mentally name the best card of the suit still unplayed. This is a great assistance to memory.

It is of the utmost importance that you should recollect the cards played. Your ultimate success depends almost entirely on this most essential point. You must not despair if your memory frequently fails you at first. Like all other distinct faculties of the mind, it is strengthened by practice. Habit is memory's best auxiliary. If you take a proper interest in the game, the mental application requisite to enable you to follow its various modifications will amply suffice to ensure attention—a most indispensable quality in a whist-player. Trust not, therefore, to any artificial system of mnemonics; for all the rules given for fixing the attention are mere expedients for interesting the mind. Study with fixed determination to make yourself thoroughly acquainted with the principles and theory of the game, and you will find that your powers of recollection will be in proportion to your extent of knowledge.

Inattention or careless play fully justifies your partner in strongly expressing his annoyance and displeasure; and should you be in fault, you must submit in silence to the well-merited reproof.

Theoretical knowledge will ensure satisfactory practical results. But you must not be too anxious to display this knowledge by underplay and deep finessing. Play rather, for some time, as straightforward a game as your hand will permit. A false card will deceive your partner; a false manœuvre cause your rashness to be followed by defeat.

Endeavour to acquire a habit of playing your cards rapidly. Nothing is so wearisome and worrying to your partner, and indeed to the whole table, as that eternal pondering over your hand, or partially drawing out several cards before you play. Consideration is, of course, at times highly necessary; but having, after careful inspection, determined on your plan of attack and defence, a short delay ought to suffice to meet any unexpected manœuvre of the enemy.

Keep your eyes constantly fixed on the table; it is there the game is played, the battle fought. Perpetually poring over your own hand during the progress of the game may be compared to the vain folly of a pipeclay general idly inspecting the belts of his troops, while the ringing tubes of the enemy are dealing death among their ranks.

Receive instructive reproof, when given in a gentlemanly manner, mildly and gratefully. Knowledge acquired from oral instruction will assuredly make a deeper impression, and one far more permanent, than can be obtained from the private study of all the books that have been written on the subject.

Trust to the judgment of experienced players, and presume not to form opinions from casual results, or you will, to a moral certainty, entertain wrong notions, draw erroneous conclusions, and establish false theories most prejudicial to your progress, and most difficult to eradicate, and which will not fail to involve you in disastrous consequences. This will guard you against the folly and rudeness of finding fault with your veteran partner on the unexpected failure of a well-intended manœuvre. Fortuitous circumstances may intervene to mar the most subtle scheme. "Checks and disasters grow in the veins of actions highest reared." Bear the disappointment with good temper, and bend gracefully to the opposing storm.

Although the following pages are intended to elucidate the accepted maxims of this fascinating game, you must not suppose that they are never to be departed from. The endless changes and infinite variety which constitute its great charm, preclude the possibility of laying down fixed rules for the management of every hand. This, so far from being a disadvantage, establishes its superiority over almost every other game, and gives it that intellectual character which has secured the approbation of the educated world. The mind is pleasingly excited by the conviction that there is always something to be learned; and that success depends, not on chance, but on superior judgment.

Ready powers of calculation, coolness, and abstraction, are all requisite qualities to form the fine whist-player; and he will indeed be considered, at all times and in all countries, an immense acquisition by the true lovers of the art who crowns these qualities with SWEETNESS OF TEMPER.

The Lead.

Much depends on the way you may open your game; therefore never lead a card without a specific object.

1. The best leads are from sequences; and in general, begin with the highest: but with a quart or quint to a king, or with king, queen, knave, begin with the lowest; otherwise, if your partner holds ace and only one other, he will be compelled to take your queen, and your suit is obstructed.

2. The next best lead will be from your strongest suit,—in which case lead the lowest, unless you can lead from another suit, which, on return from your partner, will give a chance of a fair finesse; as, for instance, from—

3. Ace, king, knave, lead the king, then change your suit; and when your partner returns your first or original lead, finesse the knave, when, unless the queen is on your left, you make three tricks in the suit.

4. With ace four of a suit,* lead the lowest; with ace five or more, the ace, as, having so many of the suit yourself, there would be a probability of your ace being trumped if you kept it for the second round. In trumps, ace and four others, the ace.

* By this is meant ace and three small ones, ace and four, &c. &c.

5. With ace, king, and others, lead the king; because, if trumped, your partner knows where the ace is, while your adversaries remain uncertain,—an advantage on your side.

6. With king, queen, and others, lead the king, and if it passes lead a small one, as the ace may have been kept up by your adversaries; should your partner hold it, your three tricks are secured if the suit is not trumped, or should you have been able to keep the commanding card—the wisest play—till trumps are exhausted.

7. With king, or queen, or knave four of a suit, lead the lowest.

8. With king, queen, ten, lead the king: if he wins, change the suit; and when your partner returns your first lead, you must make two tricks in the suit, if ace, knave are on your right, and the ace has been kept up (55).

9. With queen, knave, nine, lead the queen; if she falls to ace or king, finesse the nine when the suit is returned: if the ace and king are not both against you, two tricks fall to your share.

10. With ace, queen, knave, lead the ace, then the queen; if your partner holds the king and others, and is a good player, he will take your queen with his king, and return a small one, so as not to stop your suit.

11. With ace, king, three small ones, you may, if *strong in trumps*, and you require three tricks to win the game,— risk leading a small one, and run the chance of your partner winning the first round with the knave, should the queen be on his right. Ace, king, three small ones.

12. It is seldom judicious to lead a single loose card with the expectation of ruffing, as your opponents are almost sure to detect your object, which they must do if holding many of the suit themselves, in which case they will immediately lead trumps, if strong in them, draw yours and your partner's, and thus establish the suit you had expected to ruff. Wait patiently till the suit is led by your partner or adversaries, when you obtain the desired ruff to a certainty, and perhaps enable your partner to make third and fourth best. Again, if you lead this single card, and your partner is decidedly weak in the suit, he may imagine it to be your strong one, and lead trumps to enable you to establish it, and thus play the adversaries' game. A single loose card should be led only when you are playing for the odd trick. This will be explained hereafter. Single card.

13. If you want two rounds of any suit, and you hold ace and others, lead the ace.

Forced Leads.

14. The progress of the game, and adverse fall of cards, may frequently oblige you to make disadvantageous leads, by which the chance of gaining two or three tricks in a suit is lost; for instance, from a suit in which you hold tenace.

If thus forced to lead from ace, queen, and others, lead the ace, and then a small one. This, however provoking, is better than opening a fresh weak suit in the middle of the game.

15. It is bad to be compelled to lead from several small cards. The above case (14) will show the disadvantage of leading from three of a suit, except, of course, from sequences (1). Compelled by circumstances, lead the highest: thus, with king, knave, and another, lead the king; and if it succeeds, continue with the knave, which will give your partner the option of finessing.

The disadvantage of this lead is easily understood when you consider that with ace, knave, or ten, and another, or king, knave, and another, you have a very fair chance of making two tricks if the lead comes from elsewhere; whereas, when forced to lead them yourself, in the latter case you may lose all three if ace, queen, ten are against you.

The examples given ought to be sufficient to enable you at once to distinguish a "forced" lead from an original one, when coming from your partner, and to show the propriety of regulating your play accordingly.

Trumps.

16. One of the greatest difficulties presented to the young whist-player is the judicious and proper management of trumps, which seems to him involved in endless perplexity.

It is therefore a point that requires his utmost attention, as no game can be correctly played without a thorough knowledge of it; while ignorance is sure to lead to destruction, the slightest error in this particular being fraught with fatal consequences. He must first learn when it is right to lead them.

Main object in playing trumps.

The objection evinced by a great majority of players to part with their trumps is quite incomprehensible. They will not understand that the grand object is not to make as many tricks in trumps as possible, but, by skilfully wielding them, to establish superiority and command in other suits. It is quite clear that this most desirable aim cannot be attained if they are kept in hand to the last. They ought to be used as a most formidable attacking force, not looked upon as a reserve.

To weaken adversaries.

17. With five or six trumps it is almost always right to lead them; by so doing you may reasonably expect to weaken your adversaries, take from them the power of ruffing your own or your partner's best suits, and still be left with sufficient to ruff theirs. This rule will be evidently seen to be imperative, if your object is to establish a long suit.*

To establish long suit.

Through an honour.

18. It is generally right to lead through an honour, giving your partner the opportunity of a finesse.

19. If you hold ace, king, knave, and the queen is turned up on your right, lead the king; this makes three tricks certain. When your partner returns the lead, if the adversary puts on a small one, your knave wins the second round. If

* I once heard a first-rate whist-player say, that with four trumps in your hand, it was mostly right to lead them; but that he who held five, and did not lead them, was fit only for a lunatic asylum.

he puts on the queen, she falls to your ace, and your knave becomes king card (3).

20. With ace, queen, ten, and the knave turned up on your right, lead the queen, and finesse the ten on return of suit. This secures two tricks; for if the queen falls to the king first round, your ace and ten must both make if led through or up to.

Difference between trumps and plain suits.

21. With king, queen, three small ones, you may either lead a small one, or begin with the king, and, if it passes, proceed with your lowest, as the ace may have been kept up by your adversaries requiring the lead after the third round. (Observe the difference with plain suits, in which, with the above-named cards, the king is always led.) (6).

To strengthen partner.

22. If your opponents are at the point of three, and you have marked, perhaps, only one, lead trumps, and your best if you have no honour: the object is to strengthen your partner, and also to make him acquainted with your weakness; when, unless he should chance to hold two honours, you cannot possibly save the game, it being most unlikely that he should succeed in making ten tricks against two by honours, which alone give your adversaries the victory.

23. With a very weak hand, and only two trumps—say queen and another—lead the queen: she will be a strengthening card for your partner (22). Leading the ace, if you hold it, and then a small one, insures two rounds.

Two rounds.

The proper management of trumps during the progress of the game will be explained as we advance, our present

object being to show the general rules for playing the four hands in succession.

Second Hand.

24. As a general maxim, play your lowest card second hand, being careful not to destroy the tenace you may hold in any other suit by so doing. This is easily understood; as, for instance, with

25. Ace, king, knave, play the king second hand, by which you preserve the tenace; as when the suit is returned by left-hand adversary, you must make three tricks, which you could not have done had you put on your lowest—the knave—if the queen had been on your left (3). Ace, king, knave.

26. With ace, queen, ten, put on the queen for a similar reason, viz. the chance of making a trick with the ten.

27. King, queen, ten, put on queen with the same object.

28. With queen, knave, nine, put on the knave (9).

29. Put on the lowest of a sequence. This has the advantage of giving your partner direct information—always a most desirable object—as he knows to a certainty that you do not hold the next inferior card to the one you play; and also shows him that, if you win with the queen, the king is not on his right hand. Lowest of sequence.

30. With ace, king, and others, put on one of the honours, unless very strong in trumps, when you may put on a small one, with the hope that your partner may hold third or fourth best. This is always a great risk, a

Strength in trumps.

suit being so frequently ruffed third round, and gives also your adversary the opportunity of making a small trump. The first round may also be won by your opponents, in which case you lose two tricks.

31. With ace, queen, and others, put on the lowest. If the lead is from king, and your partner wins with the knave, you secure three tricks, remaining with ace, queen over king.*

Ace, knave, one.

32. With ace, knave, and another, if the king is led, do not take it; throw a small one, and keep your ace for the queen, which is almost sure to be on your right (6); your knave then wins the third round, and you make two tricks.

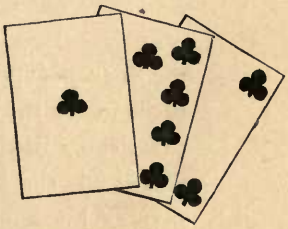
33. With ace, knave, ten, one other, if in trumps, you may put on the ten with a fair expectation of winning the first trick, because in trumps it is right to lead a small one from king, queen, and others (21). But in plain suits the king is always led (6). If, therefore, a small plain card is led, put on the small one, as king or queen must be behind you, and your ten would be sacrificed without any advantage gained.

* In all these cases, where three tricks are allowed to be secured, we of course infer that the suit is not trumped. This will show the expediency of getting out the trumps before you lead the suit for the third time.

There is also another exception to the general rule of putting an honour on an honour second hand, viz. if you hold ace, and the knave is led, do not cover it with the ace unless you also hold the queen, when the king cannot be on your right (1). The knave is never led from king knave.

34. With king and others, do not put the king on queen led, as this lead has probably come from queen, knave, nine (9). If the ten is in your partner's hand, you must make one trick at any rate; because if left-hand adversary does not put on his ace second round, the ten wins; if he does put it on, your king is safe to win the third trick. If ace and ten are both with left-hand adversary, you cannot make a trick in the suit by any manner of play. King and others.

35. With ace, ten, and another, in the same manner pass the queen; and should your partner fortunately hold the king, you make three tricks in the suit. You must here particularly note, that if the queen wins, the king must be with your left-hand adversary; consequently it would be folly to finesse your ten in the second round.



36. You will always be perfectly justified in passing an honour, if by so doing a fair probability is offered of establishing a long suit. A case will be given.

37. Many players differ as to the expediency of putting on king second hand if he is single guarded. I think the soundest play is decidedly to do so, it being two to one against left-hand adversary having ace. Should he hold queen, and his partner led from ace, they make two tricks to a certainty if you keep back the king. King, one.

38. With queen and one other, put on the small one. Putting on the queen would expose your weakness, and your opponents would be sure to finesse against you. Should the Queen, one.

lead be from trumps, and the ace or king has been turned up on your right, you may in that case put her on.

Knave, one. 39. With knave and one other, put on the small one, unless you wish your partner to lead trumps, when put on the knave.

Ten, two others. 40. With ten and two others, put on the ten second round; by so doing you may enable your partner to keep the best card in his hand for third round.

Third Hand.

Success depends greatly on the skilful management of the cards in the third hand. Finessing is more general and more practicable in this hand than in any other, in which the fine player has the best and most frequent opportunities of displaying his knowledge of the game; and great results may be expected from superior talent. He will never forget his partner's original lead, and note carefully the cards that fall to it. He will show his judgment and subtle expertness by returning his partner's leads, or by a timely change of suits. From his partner's first lead he may draw conclusions as to his probable strength by comparison with his own hand, and decide whether it will be most advisable to endeavour to make the most of his own cards, or to forego his own chances of success, and trust to his partner's power and skill.

41. Win with the lowest of a sequence, and return the highest.

42. The state of the scores must be your guide as to how far you may venture on finessing (page 23). It would

be most unjustifiable, with a weak hand and a low score, imminently to risk the game for the sorry purpose of gratifying your vanity by an ostentatious exhibition of under-play.

With ace, queen, four or five of a suit, put on the queen; if she wins, return the ace immediately, remembering that the commanding card of partner's lead should never be retained. It is evident from this, that if third hand plays ace first round, he cannot hold queen also.

43. If, after the first round, you remain with queen, ten, against king, knave, you may safely venture to finesse the ten; because, second player not having put on king second round, it is an equal chance that your partner holds it. Your ten, therefore, wins the trick if the knave is not in fourth hand; but it is equally probable that he may be in second hand.

44. Never take your partner's queen with ace; as, although she may be taken by king in fourth hand, it would be very injudicious to expend two honours in securing one trick; added to which, you throw away the command of the remaining cards in the suit.

45. Your partner leads knave, take it with ace if you have it (1), unless you also hold ten, when you may pass it, reasonably expecting to gain a trick by finessing ten, should the opportunity offer.

Knave led, ace in hand.

46. With ace, knave, and others, pass your partner's ten with a similar ulterior view.

Ace and two small ones, partner leading nine.

47. With ace and two small ones you ought certainly to allow the nine to pass, if led by your partner: because the nine is never led, except, first, when highest of a poor suit; second, from king, knave, ten, nine; third, from quint to a king. In the second case, if the queen is not on your left it must win. In the third case it is *ipso facto* a winning card. In the first case, it is evident that you can win but one trick, which your ace secures second round. You consequently run no risk with the above-named cards in passing partner's nine.

48. With king, knave, and two others, finesse the knave, and return a small one.

49. With queen, ten, and others, play queen first round, and finesse ten on second.

50. With king, knave, and another, put on the king, and return the knave; this will probably strengthen partner's hand; if he led from queen, your knave draws the ace if on his left, and his queen is secure. There is also another way of playing these three cards, viz. to your partner's lead putting on the knave, and if it wins, returning a small one, when, if your partner has led from ace, you make three tricks, remaining with king for third round.

51. Holding king and others, if your partner leads the ace, and then the queen, take her with your king, and return

a small one, otherwise he will not be able to pursue his suit: you must be aware that he holds the knave also (10).

52. Always return your partner's lead, particularly in trumps, unless you have strong reasons for not doing so: as, for instance, if he leads an equivocal card—nine or ten; if you feel confident that the game can be won, or a greater number of tricks made by playing your own cards, regardless of his hand. Equivocal card led by partner.

Fourth Hand.

53. It seems almost needless to say that you must win the trick as cheaply as possible; and if you cannot beat the third hand, throw the most useless card you have to it. Mark this difference between the third and fourth hand,—with the former you win with the lowest of a sequence; fourth hand win with the highest. This is done to keep your adversaries in the dark. Difference between third and fourth hand.

54. If you have a decidedly weak hand, and the third hand shows poverty in the suit led by his partner, by putting on eight or nine, and you win the trick, it is much better to play back to this third weak hand by returning his partner's lead than to open one of your own weak suits. This is the most likely way of putting the lead into your partner's hand, which, under the circumstances, ought to be your principal object. It gives him useful information, and he will then make the most of his own cards. If you open a weak suit, he will fancy you strong in it, return it, and give the lead again to his adversaries. Weak hand.

55. With ace, knave, and others, if the king is led, pass it; should the suit be continued, you make two tricks to a certainty, which you could not have done had you taken the king (32).

Progress and Conduct of the Game.

HAVING made yourself thoroughly acquainted and conversant with the foregoing rules and maxims, you must proceed to learn their application in the progress of the game: become acquainted with their exceptions, so that you may at once know when they may and ought to be departed from. This brings us to what is called "under-play," or the "back game," which consists in keeping back the best card to deceive your adversaries as to its real position, with various other artifices employed to mystify your opponents.

Importance of the knowledge of under-play.

Under-play is a manœuvre a knowledge of which in the game of whist is of vital importance. It is one which the experienced player, like a skilful general, is constantly practising, and tells fearfully against the uninitiated. As long as you remain ignorant of its principles, the consequences must be disastrous and fatal.

It is a common but unwise expression—as leading to hurtful conclusions—that "cards will beat their makers." The individual who adopts this as his motto will never become an accomplished player, evidently leaving all to blind chance, trusting solely to fortune for success. But the fair

goddess does not remove her bandage to prosper fools. Her favours are indiscriminately distributed. The indolent and ignorant invidiously believe that the successful owe all their advantages to her smiles and partiality. Not so. They are the result of their own acquired knowledge and skill. Fortune will always appear to attend upon those who best know how to profit by her gifts, well illustrated by the old adage, that "the winds and the waves are mostly in favour of the ablest navigators." I cannot believe the odds on the side of good players so inconsiderable as some writers state them to be. I am firmly convinced that there are more games lost by downright bad play than through bad cards. No one who does not choose to take the trouble really to learn the game has any business at the whist-table. It is a wretched killing of time, and shows a miserably weak intellect, that can find amusement in idly pitching about a table pieces of painted pasteboard. A man of this stamp should confine himself to playing "beggar my neighbour" with his grandmother.

Certain advantage in trumps.

56. Under-play can be more frequently practised with certain advantage in trumps than in plain suits. You may indeed feel quite satisfied that you will profit more by not winning with the ace first or second round, but—curbing your impatience—by waiting for the third. The advantage to yourself and partner is immense, securing the lead after the third round of trumps; should either of you command a long suit, success will most certainly crown your forbearance. The following example will prove the assertion.

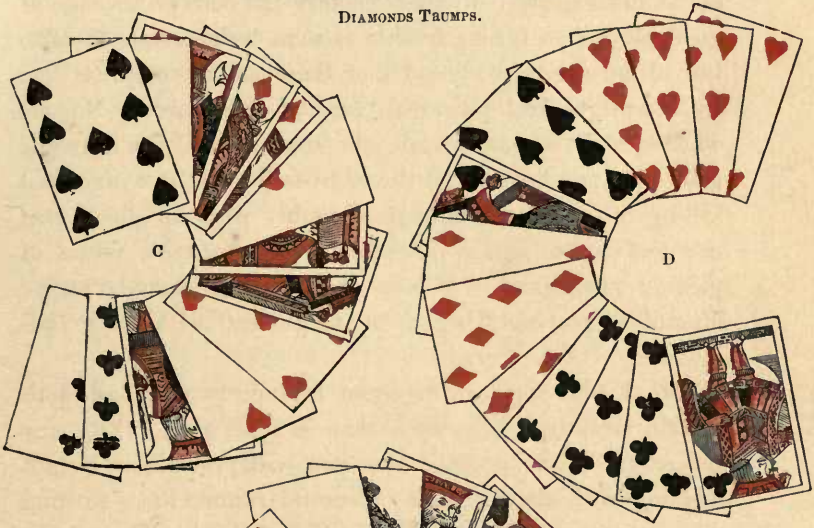
First round: C leads knave of trumps, B plays three, D four, A throws deuce.

Second round: C leads queen of trumps, B plays six, D seven, A throws another small one.

Case 56.

Five by Cards against Two by Honours.

Diamonds Trumps.



Third round: C leads king of hearts, B small one, D small one, A trumps with small one, and leads ace of trumps; remainder all fall to it. A then plays a small club, B wins with queen and returns a spade (98). A makes seven tricks in the suit.

Supposing that you are dealer, and that you turn up the deuce of diamonds. You find in your hand the ace, with two more small ones; ace, king, knave, seven, spades; ace, one small club. Your left-hand adversary has king, queen, knave of trumps, with a long suit in hearts. With the view of establishing his long suit, he will lead a trump; throw your deuce to it:—he will lead another trump; let him have that also: he will now, being uncertain as to where the ace lies, probably lead a heart; trump it with your remaining small one, and lead your ace: his king must fall to it, and, if trumps were equally divided, they will all be exhausted at the same time. You now lead your small club, hoping your partner may make second best; if so, you on return get the lead again, and most probably make all your spades. You will thus score five by cards, against two by honours. The reason for leading the small club is plain enough. If you lead off all your spades, and leave your ace and small club to the last, the right-hand adversary will not allow your partner the chance of making his queen, but will put on his king second hand and make him. This would not only save the game, but enables your opponents to score their two by honours.

A B partners against C D.

Under-play; securing lead after third round of trumps.

57. If you hold ace, king, and a small one of left-hand adversary's lead, and his partner puts on a low card, say nine, win the trick with the ace, and return the small one: your left-hand adversary will probably not put on his queen—from which he doubtless led—believing the king to be with your partner, who consequently makes his knave, and your king remains for the third round.

Ace, king, and small one of left-hand adversary's lead.

58. Even with ace, king, four trumps, it would be unwise to win both first and second trick. Keep your king card for the third round, no matter where the lead comes from; always recollecting to ensure two rounds if it emanated from your partner.

Ace, four small ones.

59. If at the end of the game, trumps being all played, you remain with ace and four small ones of a suit not yet led, and your adversary leads the king and queen, let them both pass, and you will probably make three tricks in the suit; whereas if you had played your ace first round, you could have made but one.

60. With four trumps and a long suit to bring in, do not allow yourself to be forced, even should certain winning cards be led. Throw loose cards to adversaries' winning cards. The moment your partner gets the lead, he will, if he knows any thing of the game, lead trumps to get them out of your way, and you establish your long suit. Mark well the fall of the cards in the following example:—spades trumps. You hold ace, knave, ten, deuce; a long suit in clubs, ace, king, queen, two small ones; no hearts, and four diamonds. Your partner dealt, and turned up queen. Your right-hand adversary leads the king of hearts*—throw a small diamond; he leads the ace of hearts—throw another diamond; bent on forcing you, he leads another heart—throw again a diamond: your partner wins this third round of

Declining force.

A B partners against C D.

* Having been accustomed to dash, with intense satisfaction, a small trump on a winning card, the uninstructed player sees with dismay his partner pass an ace or a king, and even reluctantly admits the expediency. This is one of the many prejudices which experience expels from his mind.

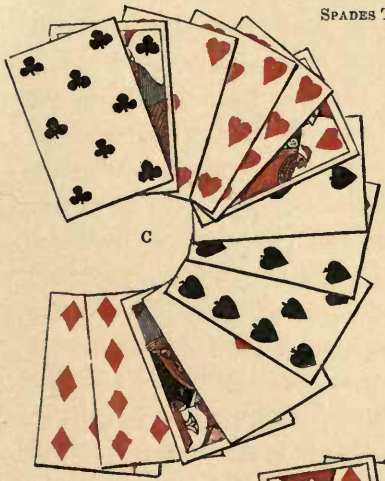
First round: D leads king of hearts, A throws small diamond, C small heart, B small heart.

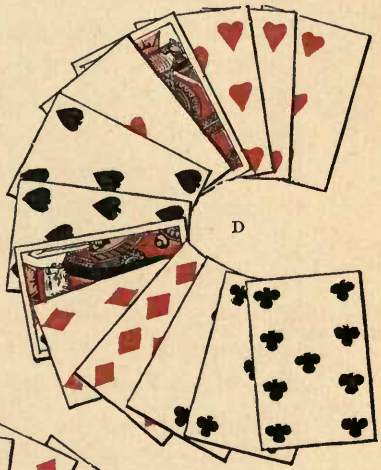
Second round: D plays ace of hearts, A small diamond, C small heart, B small heart.

CASE 60.

ESTABLISHING SUIT WITH FOUR TRUMPS.

SPADES TRUMPS.





Third round: D plays small heart, A diamond, C ten of hearts, B wins with queen and plays queen of trumps, D puts on king, A wins with ace, and plays in succession knave and ten of trumps, draws them all, and establishes his suit of clubs.

hearts, and leads his queen of trumps—his best. If right-hand adversary puts on king, your ace wins the first trick; you then lead the knave, which brings down four more trumps; and now your ten draws three more. Your long suit of clubs is now established, as you remain with the lead and the long trump.

In the descriptions here given of the method of playing different hands, it is not intended that the student should cherish in his memory the exact position of every card; for, so endless are the ever-varying accidents of this interesting game, that a thousand years might elapse, and not once find them similarly disposed. The object is to assist the elucidation of the principles of the game, convince him of their truth, and give him correct notions. Having once cleared away the mists of doubt and prejudice which obscured his judgment, the induction is simple enough. Guided by and acting on his knowledge of fixed principles, he must arrive at just and happy conclusions, and will be able successfully to apply the given rules in a particular case to general practice.

Application of given rules to general practice.

61. From the last example you learn this fixed and important rule, viz. "whenever your partner refuses to trump a certain winning card, play a trump the moment you get the lead, and the highest you have in your hand."

Important maxim.

62. It therefore follows, that if your adversary refuses to trump your winning cards, by no means lead trumps (the great and most common error of all beginners), but continue forcing him, as long as possible, with the best cards of the suit he renounces. Always bear in mind that refusing to

Forcing adversary declining a ruff.

ruff, so far from showing weakness in trumps, is the strongest proof possible of great power, it being an established maxim, "never to trump early in the game if strong in trumps, but always if weak;" in the latter case the object being to make a small trump the moment an opportunity offers, which would otherwise be useless. Leading trumps when your adversary refuses to ruff is therefore playing his game.

Passing queen of trumps.

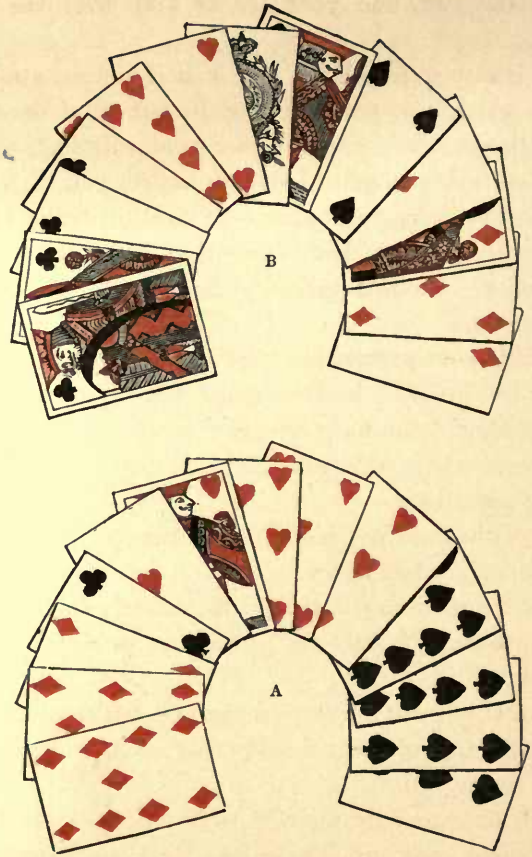
63. If the queen of trumps is led on your right, and you hold king and five small ones, let her pass, because the chance is equal that your partner holds the ace. If your opponent has led from queen four trumps, it is also an equal chance that the ace lies single either with his or your partner; if with the former, her loss is more severely felt, as two honours will be expended in the gain of one trick.

Weak hand with two trumps.

64. Supposing you have ace, king, queen, of a plain suit, eight other cards of no value, and the ten and nine of trumps, lead off your ace, and follow with the ten of trumps, because it is 5 to 2 in favour of your partner holding either king, queen, or knave of trumps (see Odds). Should he be so fortunate as to have both king and knave, he will pass your ten; this forces the ace from your right, if the queen is on your left. The moment your partner gets the opportunity, he will return your original lead; you win and play back your nine of trumps,—the capture of adversary's queen is certain.

Passing queen with ace or king, ten.

65. If the queen is led on your right, and you hold either ace, ten, or king, ten, and another, let her pass: should the ace or king be in your partner's hand, you make three tricks in the suit. The queen having been led most probably from queen, knave, nine, you have the finesse of the ten on the



CASE 68. PLAYING FOR THE ODD TRICK, WITH FIVE TRUMPS AND SINGLE CARD.

HEARTS TRUMPS.

If *leader*, begin with the four of clubs.

If *third player*, and D trumps your partner's winning card, do not over-trump, but throw small diamond (81).

return of the suit, and your ace or king wins the third trick (35).

66. It is easy to establish a long suit if you are strong in trumps, in which case you of course lead them at once. If weak in trumps, show your partner your suit first, and he will then endeavour to get the trumps out for you. Long suit and weak in trumps.

67. Do not force your partner if weak in trumps yourself, as it will leave you both exposed to the full power of your enemies. To this general rule there are, however, exceptions, viz.: Erroneous force.

1st, If your partner has evidently led for a ruff. You may infer this if he leads ace, and then a small one of a plain suit, and you have several of the suit yourself. If you are weak in this suit, he must have led from ace and several others. The force.

2d, If he does not himself play trumps, having been once forced, at him again.

3d, If superiority in trumps is evidently against you.

4th, Should there be a probability of establishing a see-saw.

5th, If you are playing for the odd trick only. This is a fitting opportunity for showing when it is right to lead a single card.

68. If you want only the odd trick, and you are leader with one small card, ace, knave, and three small trumps—four small cards of third suit,—and three valueless cards of fourth suit, lead your single card. If it is won by fourth player, he, guessing from his own hand that you have led from a single card, will either lead trumps, or through your When to lead a single card.

weak suits; in which case it is probable that you and your partner gain the tenace,—he in one of the plain suits, you in trumps.

Odd trick with single card.

69. If with the above hand you are third player, and your partner leads the ace to your single card, and then plays the king, should he by chance be trumped on your right, do not over-trump, but throw away a low card of your weakest suit; because this makes your partner last player in the next round—always an advantage,—and may give him tenace in your weak suits.

70. If you know that your partner has the last trump in, and you hold ace, king, and three or four small cards of a suit not yet played,—if you lead, play a small card of this long suit, it being an equal chance that your partner has a better card than the fourth player. If he does win this first round, you most probably gain five or six tricks in the suit; whereas had you led ace and king, it is 2 to 1 against your making more than two tricks, because it is 2 to 1 against your partner holding queen (see Odds). The lead once taken from you, after second round, you cannot get it again, and the remaining small cards are consequently useless. By the first method of playing these cards your risk is very trifling for a considerable contingent advantage.

Partner left with long trump.

Long trump and thirteenth card.

71. At the end of the game, being left with a thirteenth card—a losing card,—and the long trump, lead the losing card, as it may perchance be passed on your left, and your partner may win with an inferior card. If you play your thirteenth card first, your adversary will certainly not pass your losing card, there being only two cards left to be played.

72. Be ever most particular in noting the cards your partner throws when declining a ruff: should his discard be a low one, never lead up to it, as you may be quite certain that it is from his weakest suit. If he discards the best of a suit, it is a clear intimation that the next best are in his hand also. If he discards a second best, he has no more of the suit. In both cases he wants trumps to be led. Discard.

73. Do not be too anxious to trump second hand early in the game. Never, in fact, do so, unless very weak in trumps, but let your partner have the chance of winning with second or third best. A strong example has been given (60), showing the propriety and immense advantage gained by allowing even two certain winning cards to pass when you are strong in trumps. The case would be exactly similar if your partner had the long suit to bring in. Trumping second hand.

74. Suppose diamonds trumps, and to a club led your partner throws a heart; his hand must be composed of trumps and spades: you win the first trick, but being weak in trumps dare not force him (67). Should you hold king, knave, one small one of spades, and your partner has queen and five small spades, by leading the king you may make five tricks in the suit. Your king falls to adversary's ace; he may lead trumps, which your partner commanding exhausts: when you get the lead again, play the knave of spades, and then a small one up to partner's queen;—he will make every card in the suit (see note to 31). In all these examples, given to show the necessity of clearly understanding the nature of a force, you will also see the fatal result which must overthrow you if you injudiciously force your partner with- Five tricks in one suit, leading king up to ace.

out the requisite strength in trumps to justify it, as he will of course conclude that you hold at least four, and play accordingly (67).

Long suit with four weak trumps.

75. You cannot possibly expect to establish a long suit with four trumps only, if you take a force, or over-trump early in the game. Seeing the trumps fall from your adversaries ought to give you additional confidence, as you are strengthened in proportion as they are weakened by every one drawn from them.

Partner's suit not to be obstructed.

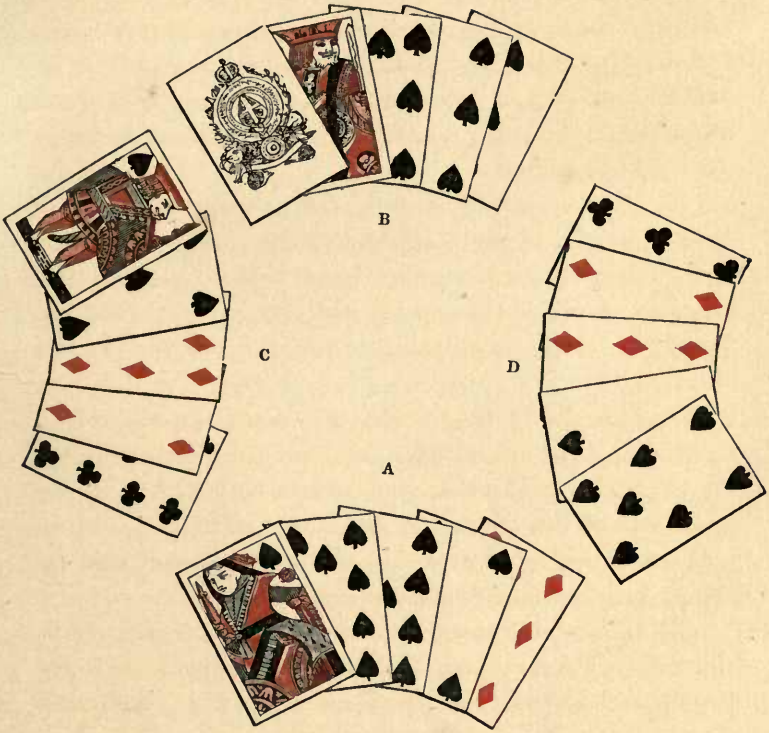
76. Be most careful never to obstruct your partner's suit by keeping the commanding card in your own hand (42). This requires great attention; but a little calculation will prove the truth of the maxim, and practice will soon convince you of the expediency of acting up to it. For instance:

77. Should you hold queen, ten, one other of partner's strong suit,* and you have to play, lead the queen, and then the ten, which will leave the course open to him, and he may make four or five tricks. If you lead a small one, keeping your queen for the third round, she stops the suit, and the remainder become loose cards in partner's hand.

Cautions against obstruction.

78. If partner commences with the ace of his strong suit, of which you hold queen, ten, nine, and a small one, play the nine to his ace, the ten to his king; and your queen winning the third round, you lead back the small one. If you had thrown the small one to his ace, you would have lost one trick by obstructing his suit, as you must have won the

* The suit not having been led by either adversary, it is clearly your partner's strongest.



CASE 78. HEARTS WERE TRUMPS.

Showing how to avoid obstructing your partner's strong suit.

fourth round, when, as in case 77, the remaining cards are useless.

79. If your partner leads ace, king of his strong suit, you having queen, ten, one, must play your ten to his ace, and queen to his king; you may in this way gain four tricks, and risk the loss of only one. It is easy to see, that if your opponents have but four cards of this suit equally divided between them, they must all fall to your partner's ace and king; and not being obstructed by your queen, he proceeds unmolested with the remainder.

80. The great advantage of forcing a strong hand has been sufficiently exemplified. It now becomes necessary to guard the young player against the too-common and ruinous error of forcing both adversaries with the same suit. One moment's reflection being sufficient to expose this egregious folly, it is really most surprising that so many fall headlong into it. Surely no great effort of intellect is required to take in this single fact,—that leading a suit renounced by both adversaries enables one to throw away loose cards, while the other makes his small trumps; and that consequently the former, through your senseless proceeding, is put in a position to trump your best suit. Grasp this important maxim at once, and never lose sight of it.

Unpardonable error in forcing two hands.

81. It being frequently of much consequence to make your partner last player in any suit about to be led, this desirable object is obtained by declining, circumspectively, to over-trump right-hand adversary. If partner holds tenace, your judicious forbearance makes it secure (68).

Making partner last player important.

82. Now that you fully understand the impropriety of

forcing your partner when you are numerically weak yourself (67), you readily draw the gratifying conclusion, that he is moderately strong in trumps himself if he decides on forcing you. Some little judgment is, however, necessary to decide whether it is his intention to force you. His real object is inferred from the card he leads. If he plays a high card of the suit you renounce, he may not wish you to ruff; if he leads a low one, you may conclude that such is his intention.

Detecting partner's object in leading to a renounce.

Leading king card of adversary's discard.

83. When your adversary refuses to ruff, mark well the card he throws away; and if you have the commanding card of that suit, lead it before you proceed with your force.

Strength in trumps a correct guide.

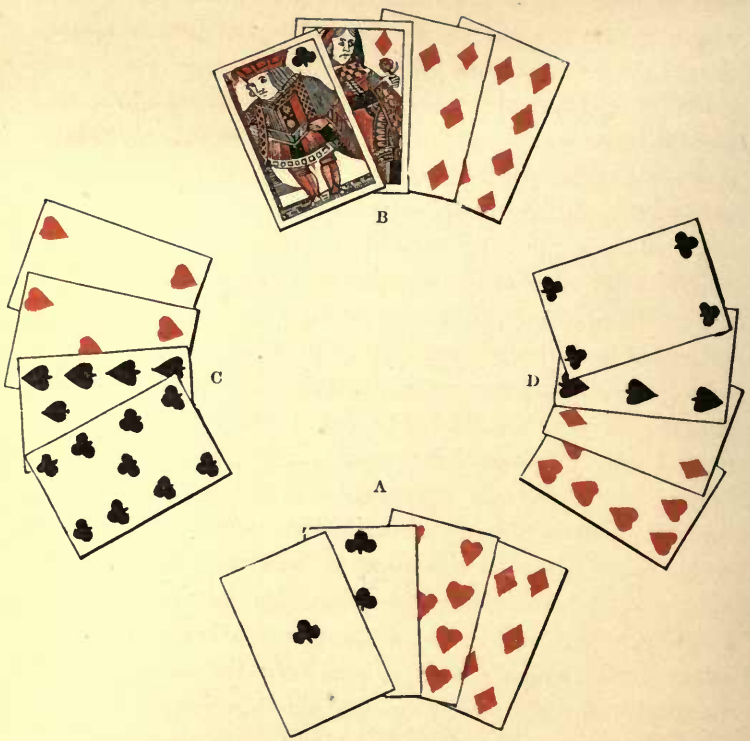
84. The conduct of the game should invariably be regulated by your strength in trumps: great power in this respect authorising you to play a bold dashing game; weakness compelling you to abstain from all rash ventures, and to act with extreme caution and circumspection.

Importance of fifth trick.

85. If you are weak, never risk the loss of the fifth trick: on it may depend the fate of the game and of the rubber. Recollect that three by cards and two by honours make game; consequently, if your adversaries hold three honours, and you can secure but four tricks, it is all over with you. Let all your efforts then be directed to saving the game, effected by making sure of the fifth trick.

Commanding card partner's renounce.

86. If strong in trumps, and your partner ruffs a suit of which you hold the commanding card, force him with small ones of this suit, keeping your commanding card back; it will prove as valuable as a trump at the end of the game, and perplexing to your opponents.



CASE 89. RUFFING WITH BEST TRUMP.

CLUBS TRUMPS.

First round: D leads six of spades, A trumps with ace, C ten of spades, B small diamond.

Second round: A leads three of trumps, C nine, B wins with knave, D four of trumps.

B wins *third* and *fourth round* with queen and ten of diamonds.

87. If the remaining trumps are between you and your partner, and you hold besides only one or two loose cards, play a trump that will put the lead into your partner's hand, to enable him to play his own game.

88. Stop your adversary's long suit without a moment's hesitation, even when obliged to ruff with your best trump. A double advantage is obtained by this apparent sacrifice: you take from one opponent the lead, from the other the opportunity of throwing away loose cards.

89. Supposing at the end of the game you are left with the best trump and one small one—say ace and deuce—and two loose cards; your partner, you know, holds the next best —say knave; your adversary a suit of which you have none: trump with your ace, and lead the small one to your partner's knave. This may give you four tricks and the game. Had you trumped with your small one, you would have been compelled either to lead your ace, when your partner's knave would have fallen to it, or one of your losing cards: you could not in this way possibly make more than three tricks. Ruffing with best trump.

90. Do not be induced to change your suit merely because the first and second round have been unsuccessful. Continue with the suit; you may give your partner an opportunity of trumping and over-trumping. Nothing can be worse than opening a fresh weak suit in the middle of a game (14). Caution against changing suit.

91. Each player is left with four cards. You hold two trumps and two thirteenth cards. You know that your opponents hold the other two remaining trumps, superior to yours: lead one of your trumps; because if the two with Two trumps with two thirteenth cards.

adversaries are divided between them, they both fall to your lead; you then ruff whatever suit they lead, and your two thirteenth cards must of course make. By this mode of play you secure three tricks.

When to play turn-up card.

92. When dealer, play the turn-up card as soon as you can without detriment to your opponents' lead; it tends to deceive them. Withhold it as long as possible from your partner's lead; this gives him information as to your probable strength.

Object in leading thirteenth card.

93. A thirteenth card is generally led to get the best trump out of partner's hand, intimating a wish to be led up to. Therefore in a similar case put on your best or none.

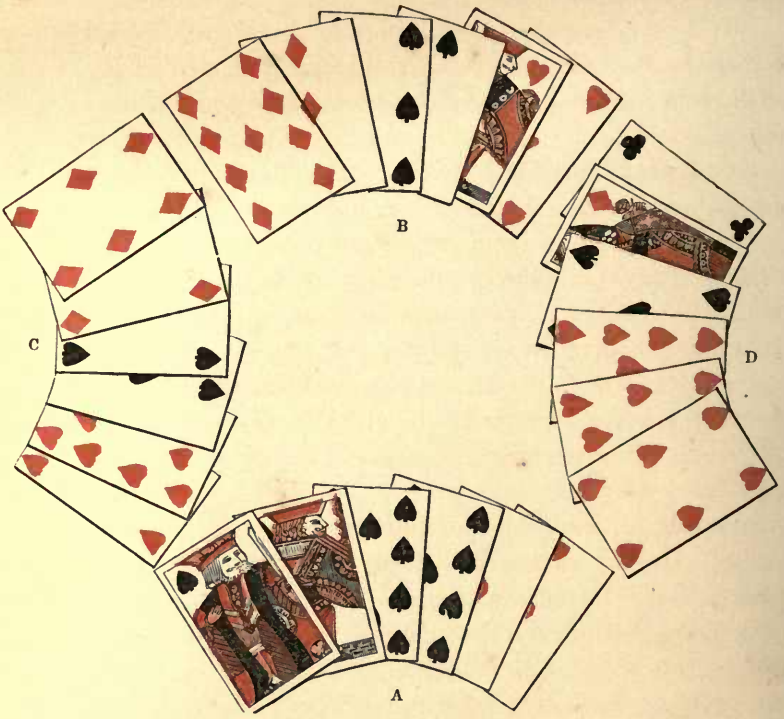
94. As one of your primary objects will always be to establish tenace, your great aim should clearly be directed to defeat this manœuvre with the enemy. A little subtlety will be requisite.

To stop adversary's finesse.

95. If your left-hand adversary leads a suit, and discontinues it to show his partner that he wants to finesse, your best chance of defeating his object is to lead the suit through him yourself: this may induce him to alter his plans, dreading a ruff on the third round. Thus: if he has led king, and changed his suit to show that he holds ace, knave also, by leading the suit yourself he will probably forego his intended finesse, put on the ace, and you may make your queen (3).

Deluding discard.

96. You may occasionally, with advantage, throw away a high card to adversary's lead, should you wish to induce him to discontinue the suit: but this ruse, though very successful against the young player, must seldom be attempted with experienced practitioners. It must at any rate be done



CASE 99. THROWING AWAY A WINNING CARD.

CLUBS TRUMPS.

First round: D leads queen of diamonds, A nine of spades, C diamond, B diamond.

Second round: D six of hearts, A three of hearts, C ten of hearts, B knave.

Third round: B nine of diamonds, D trumps, A ten of spades, C spade.

Fourth round: D small heart, A ace of hearts, and his king and knave of spades win the two next rounds.

without a moment's hesitation, or your design will most certainly be detected.

97. Failing trumps to establish a long suit, you should keep in hand as long as possible the ace or king card of any other plain suit, to endeavour to get the lead when trumps are out. Retaining king card.

98. Do not immediately return your partner's lead if you win with the queen; the ace or king must be against you (5). First trick won with queen.

99. A case might occur in which it would be expedient to throw away one of several winning cards rather than a low one. If, for instance, your adversaries are in possession of the only remaining trump, and you hold three or four winning cards of one suit, with ace, one small one of another,— should the adversaries lead a suit of which you have none, throw one of your winning cards; because, should your right-hand adversary subsequently lead through your ace, you, having retained the small one, can pass it, your partner having an equal chance with third player of winning the trick. If this fortunately happens, he may lead a forcing card, draw the long trump, and your ace brings in your winning cards. Had you thrown the small card, your partner could not have obtained the lead, as your ace must have been played second hand—the long trump would not have been drawn,—your winning cards must have been sacrificed. Throwing away winning cards.

100. With ace, knave, and another of your partner's lead, win with the ace and return the knave; it gives the opportunity of finessing. After winning with the ace, it is good play to return the highest of any two remaining cards.

The examples given, if read with proper attention, ought

to be sufficient for all theoretical purposes. A more elaborate treatise would only tend to produce weariness and confusion.

I must refer those curious to see how far enthusiasm will carry a votary in his comments on a cherished art or science, to the writings of the celebrated Deschapelles.

The aspirant should, without delay, while the impressions received from private study are fresh on the mind, proceed to carry his theory into practice.

I can suggest no method by which this desirable object can be so readily obtained, or by which instruction can be so clearly conveyed, as playing dummy with two experienced friends kindly willing to assist your endeavours. The immense advantage of oral instruction will then be fully exemplified; the saving of labour and gain of time incalculable. One week under the auspices of such tutors ought to qualify you for taking your seat at the ordinary game. In playing dummy you will have no fresh rules to learn: they are precisely the same as those already given, with the single exception,* I believe, that dummy cannot revoke, though, of course, *his* partner can.† One hand being exposed on the table facilitates instruction amazingly. Your friends will point out, and you cannot fail to observe, the importance of certain leads: for instance, you must see the manifest advantage of leading through a strong hand up to a weak one; the folly of forcing two opposing hands; the impossibility of

Advantage of oral instruction, and of playing dummy.

* Extremely doubtful.

† Dummy by many is allowed to be of the gentler sex: this is preposterous. Who ever heard of a "silent lady!"

establishing a long suit until trumps are exhausted; and the wisdom of not taking a force when strong in trumps yourself.

Dummy being equally liable with his partner to the penalty for leading out of turn, a slight caution is necessary on this point, as when taking dummy yourself you may at times get confused, and, in your eagerness to lead, forget who won the last trick. This is an oversight often committed even by old players. The constant correction is tiresome and vexatious; the penalty must be exacted.

Inferences.

It may not, perhaps, be considered superfluous to close this treatise with a synopsis of the inferences to be drawn from the fall of certain cards; for although they have been pointed out in the "progress of the game," still, by being brought together, and thus detached, submitted to observation, they will become more strongly impressed on the memory.

1st, If fourth hand wins with a high card, and then plays one of less value, with which he could have won the trick, he holds the intermediate cards. Ex. If he puts the ace on the nine, and leads the knave, the king and queen are also in his hand.

2d, If the leader plays king and stops, he also holds the ace and knave (3).

3d, A player refusing to trump a winning card indicates his wish to have trumps led (61).

4th, Throwing a high card and then a low one expresses the same wish. Ex. If to a winning card your partner drops the queen, and to the next a small one, or drops first nine and then eight, lead trumps directly.

5th, Trumping second hand early in the game indicates great weakness.

6th, When your partner forces you, conclude that he holds at least four trumps.

7th, If a high card is led, ace excepted, the next best is in the same hand. Your own cards will correct inaccuracy in this inference.

8th, Leading a high card followed by a low one indicates weakness and a desire to ruff.

THE END.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY ROBSON, LEVEY, AND FRANKLYN,
Great New Street and Fetter Lane.

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